Here's One Heir Who Knows How To Build a Foundation

David Callahan

Here's what you don’t want to happen if you're worth big money, care deeply about philanthropy, and die earlier than expected: Your kid takes over the family foundation and royally screws things up, wasting your money on stupid stuff. Or worse, directs the bulk of your fortune away from philanthropy altogether.

Here's what you do want to happen if you don't have time to set everything up just right: Your PhD daughter, with long involvement in your giving and nonprofit causes, steps up and carefully builds a professional grantmaking operation, focusing your money toward clearly defined niches where it can make a difference, and hiring top-flight talent to help.

The entrepreneur Kenneth Rainin died in 2007 at the age of 68. And since then, his daughter, Jennifer Rainin, has been building up the Kenneth Rainin Foundation. Both the foundation and its president are now really hitting their stride.

Read our new profile of Jennifer Rainin here.

Read how the Rainin Foundation has been stepping up its game here.

And read our profile of the foundation's Bay Area giving here.

It's all good stuff. Jennifer and her people know what they're doing.
Jennifer Rainin, Kenneth Rainin Foundation

TITLE: President and Executive Director

FUNDING AREAS: Inflammatory bowel disease research, student literacy in Oakland, California, and arts in the Bay Area

CONTACT: info@krfoundation.org, 510-625-5207

PROFILE: Jennifer Rainin, daughter of medical product company entrepreneur Kenneth Rainin, has been running her dad’s foundation since its public launch in 2008. But she isn’t just the daughter of a wealthy philanthropist; she’s an experienced professional with a unique background in each of the foundation’s grantmaking areas.

“Each year, the foundation will increase its funding and eventually will grant nationally,” Jennifer told Girls That Roam magazine. “It’s an unbelievable gift that he’s left behind for me. He basically left me a fairy godmother.”

Before stepping into the role of President and Executive Director at the Rainin Foundation, Jennifer earned a doctorate in education at the University of Illinois, Chicago and worked as a teacher and literacy specialist. In her current role, she has focused the foundation’s grantmaking efforts on the city of Oakland, which has historically lagged behind the rest of the Bay Area for childhood literacy rates. In addition to the education grantmaking program, she has helped developed the Rainin Oakland Preschool Initiative, which supports literacy development for children from birth to third grade.

The Rainin Foundation’s health grantmaking program is focused squarely on inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) research. She launched the foundation’s Innovations Symposium, an annual event that encourages collaboration across scientific disciplines to approach IBD research and find a cure. At the 2013 Innovations Symposium, Jennifer said:

People suffering from IBD need a breakthrough and that’s exactly what we’re hoping to elicit with our programs. We take risks and invest early in ways that other funders do not, and we look for researchers who take original and inventive approaches to IBD research. Our health grant programs support research from all scientific disciplines and encourage collaboration to find new and better treatments for IBD. Every year promising projects are presented to the Foundation, increasing our optimism that eradicating IBD is possible.
Jennifer has been battling serious health issues of her own since being diagnosed with ulcerative colitis in 1997, a disease that also afflicted her father. She’s also taken part in fundraising efforts for HIV/AIDS, multiple sclerosis, breast cancer, and cystic fibrosis research.

Jennifer Rainin has a lesser-known artistic side as well. While working as an actress in the Bay Area, she volunteered to help produce the San Francisco International Film Festival. She is known for her acting roles in “The Four Twenty-One” (2009) and “Jack & Jill” (2006). As a founding member of the San Francisco Ballet’s Encore Group, she worked to expose ballet to younger generations. More recently, Jennifer created the Visibility and Impact Awards for performing arts organizations in the Bay Area and worked with the San Francisco Film Society to establish the foundation’s Filmmaker Awards.

Rainin doesn’t fund in the LGBT space, but Jennifer knows some of these issues first hand. She married a brokerage firm vice president, Chris Patterson, in New Orleans back in 1997. However, she is currently married to Frances Stevens. Jennifer and Frances said “I do” in 2009, but their marriage wasn’t legally recognized until it was made official in San Francisco’s City Hall on June 28, 2013. They are raising two sons together. "To have a president actually say he believes we should be treated equal is extremely moving," Frances Rainin-Stevens commented after President Barack Obama’s inauguration speech.
How the Kenneth Rainin Foundation Is Stepping Up Its Game

Alyssa Ochs

If you're running a nonprofit organization in the Bay Area and aren't yet familiar with the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, then you're missing out on some serious grant opportunities. This foundation may not be on a lot of radars, because it's relatively new in its current size, with assets of $143 million at the end of 2012. (See IP's profile of the Rainin Foundation.)

Kenneth Rainin was an entrepreneur who made his fortune founding scientific and medical product companies. When he passed away in 2007, the Kenneth Rainin Foundation received a majority of the estate. His daughter, Jennifer Rainin, runs the foundation, along with a small staff.

First, you should know that this Oakland-based foundation focuses on three things: inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), making young Oakland students literate, and small to mid-sized dance, theater, and film organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area. You should also know that the Rainin Foundation has recently made some staffing changes, so you'll likely be dealing with a different program officer than in the past.

Rainin's health program awards $100,000 awards for IBD research and long-term support for previous research award grantees. The foundation also hosts an annual symposium aimed at speeding innovations to cure IBD.

Only Oakland-based schools and nonprofits should bother applying for an education grant with Rainin, since the foundation is focused on the improving literacy rates for Oakland students up to the third grade. However, Rainin's arts program is broader and serves the entire San Francisco Bay Area. The foundation has partnered up with the San Francisco Film Society to support projects that boost the Bay Area film-making community. Local dance and theater companies must be small or medium sized and engage audiences with experimental, dynamic collaborations to be considered for a grant.

The Rainin Foundation recently announced a couple of staffing changes that may very well affect how grantmaking goes in the year ahead. The foundation appointed Jackie Hausman as its new Health Program Officer, effective April 1. Before joining the team, Hausman worked for the Center for Health and Technology at the University of California, Davis, managing the pediatric tele-health program and the Model eHealth Community project for underserved communities. “Chronic illnesses like IBD can be debilitating. The Foundation’s focus on new and promising
research directions and discoveries can lead to life-changing breakthroughs that can transform people’s lives. I’m excited about working with the Foundation’s Scientific Advisory Board and engaging researchers in our efforts,” Hausman said in a press release.

In other recent news, Shelley Trott stepped up to the role of Director of Arts Strategy and Ventures, Susan True became the new Director of Education Strategy and Ventures, and Katie Fahey became the new Associate Program Officer for the Arts. All three women received promotions from their previous positions at the foundation, signaling a refocusing of grantmaking leadership.

“Our staffing changes reflect our desire to be nimble and strategically responsive to a changing environment,” said Jennifer Rainin. “We are keenly focused on helping organizations maximize their impact, and our staff will no doubt contribute significantly to helping the Foundation succeed in our philanthropic endeavors.”

The Rainin Foundation has a lot of staff firepower for an outfit that gave out less than $3 million in 2012, which leads us to suspect that the foundation’s giving is growing a lot. Indeed, some quick math suggests that the Rainin Foundation would have to give out around $7 million a year to meet its payout requirements on assets of $143 million. Our guess is that the 2013 giving data will show a number closer to that than the figure for 2012.

It's also possible that the foundation's assets grew in 2013, too, and may grow further. The foundation got $56 million in 2012 from Kenneth Rainin's estate, and there is probably more where that came from.

A few words about Jennifer Rainin: She brings an interesting background to the job of running the foundation. She has PhD in education, and has worked as a teacher and literacy specialist. She's also dealt with some serious health issues following an ulcerative colitis diagnosis in 1997. And there's more: She's worked as an actress and has been involved in any number of charitable causes. So here's somebody who knows the worlds of education, health, and the arts in a personal way—the foundation's areas of work. (See IP's profile of Jennifer Rainin.)

Keep up with upcoming deadlines for letter of inquiries and grant proposals on the foundation's calendars for education, health, and the arts.
Kenneth Rainin Foundation: Bay Area Grants

OVERVIEW: Based in Oakland, the Kenneth Rainin Foundation is still a relative newcomer on the Bay Area philanthropy scene. Its giving focuses on education for very young children in Oakland and supporting small to mid-sized arts organizations throughout the Bay Area. It also supports work on inflammatory bowel disease.

FUNDING AREAS: Reading and student literacy, and dance, theater, film, medical research (inflammatory bowel disease only).

IP TAKE: Although it may not be on your radar just yet, this is an up-and-coming Bay Area foundation that you should start paying attention to. Rainin's giving is growing, along with its assets, and it's been building a larger and more professional grantmaking operation.

PROFILE: Although Rainin gave out less than $3 million in 2012, it boosted its assets to $143 million that same year, and it seems to have ratcheted up its giving significantly in 2013. Rainin has also been internally promoting staff and building its capacity, further indicating that this is a growing foundation with a lot of grantmaking potential.

Kenneth Rainin was an entrepreneur who made his fortune founding scientific and medical product companies. At the age of twenty-five, he founded Rainin Instrument Company, which distributed laboratory instruments and later sold a line of laboratory pipettes used for liquid sample testing. After moving his business to the Bay Area, Rainin’s pipette brand became the leading brand of pipettes used in modern laboratories and recognized as a standard around the world. Aside from pipettes, he dabbled business ventures related to food manufacturing, wine production, and the gaming/hospitality industries. "He had a very curious mind," said his daughter, Jennifer Rainin. "He had an incredible gift of innovation; he would find a way to make things better."

Over time, Rainin channeled his wealth toward charitable, civic, and cultural activities, including the San Francisco Ballet and medical research at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). Before his death, he gave over $8 million to fund the Kenneth Rainin Foundation for Crohn’s disease, colitis, and intestinal disorder research at USCF and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. In 2007, he suffered from heart failure and passed away at the age of 68.

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation is based in Oakland and run by Kenneth’s daughter, Jennifer Rainin. The foundation makes grants in three priority areas: inflammatory bowel disease (IBD),
improving reading and literacy for very young underserved children, and small to mid-sized
dance, theater, and film organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Rainin's health program is exclusively focused finding a cure for IBD and awards $100,000
grants for IBD research. The program also provides long-term support for previous research
award grantees and hosts an annual symposium aimed at speeding innovations to cure
IBD. Rainin recently hired a new health program officer, Jackie Hausman, presumably a
strategy to focus and expand the foundation’s IBD grantmaking. (Read: Where’s the Rainin
Foundation Going with Its Work on Inflammatory Bowel Disease).

Only Oakland-based schools and nonprofits are considered for Rainin education grant since the
foundation is exclusively focused on the improving literacy rates for Oakland students up to the
third grade. However, Rainin's arts program is broader and serves the entire San Francisco Bay
Area. The foundation partnered up with the San Francisco Film Society to support projects that
boost the Bay Area filmmaking community. Local dance and theater companies must be small-
or medium-sized and engage audiences with experimental, dynamic collaborations to be
considered for a grant.

Recent education grants include $20,000 to the Friends of the Oakland Public School Libraries,
$45,000 to Jumpstart for Young Children, and $30,000 to the Oakland Unified School District.
Arts grants were recently awarded to the African and African American Performing Arts
Coalition ($16,000), the Deborah Slater Dance Theater ($20,000), the New Conservatory Theatre
Center ($20,000), and the Djerassi Resident Artists Program ($20,000).

Each of these three program areas has a separate blog and calendar with rolling deadlines posted
on the foundation website. If you have a hard time keeping up with all those Letter of Inquiry
and Proposal due dates, sign up to receive the foundation newsletter, which is distributed every
couple months. Email is the foundation’s preferred method of contact, and you can submit
general questions to the staff at info@krfoundation.org.

PEOPLE:

- Jennifer Rainin, President

LINKS:

- Health grant program
- Education grant program
- Arts grant program
Where's the Rainin Foundation Going With Its Work on Inflammatory Bowel Disease?

Alyssa Ochs

There are a few funders across the country that budget for a large number of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) grants, namely the Broad Foundations, Pfizer Inc., and the Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation of America. However, a lesser-known grantmaking force has emerged and has already begun to make waves in the realm of IBD research. Although the Rainin Foundation overall grantmaking has been relatively modest (less than $3 million in 2012), it is growing fast in terms of both assets and support staff (Read: How the Kenneth Rainin Foundation Is Stepping up Its Game).

The Rainin Foundation is quickly becoming one of the nation’s leaders in advancing IBD research and providing funding to cure IBD. In fact, the foundation’s health grantmaking program is squarely focused on IBD and nothing else. Let’s take a look at how Rainin is tackling IBD:

- **Innovator Awards Program**: To attract new researchers and encourage expert collaboration, Rainin provides $100,000 grants for one-year proof of principle research projects. The foundation looks for projects aimed at diagnosing, treating, and curing IBD, and the program is open to researchers at all levels and from any scientific discipline. Private foundations are ineligible; however, Rainin will award these grants to tenure track professors, public agencies, and independent projects with a qualified tax-exempt fiscal sponsor. Letters of Inquiry are accepted each year between January 15 and February 15.

- **Breakthrough Awards Program**: If you’ve already won a Rainin Innovator Award, then you may be able to get a Breakthrough Award next. Rainin provides long-term support for previous grantees who demonstrate excellent progress in validating an original hypothesis. To be eligible, grantees must provide a written scientific progress report and an oral presentation to the foundation’s Scientific Advisory Board. You can’t apply for these awards, however, as the Board evaluates and chooses between existing Innovator Award grantees at the end of the funding year.

During his lifetime, Kenneth Rainin donated millions of dollars to IBD research at the University of California, San Francisco. Today, the foundation hosts an annual Innovations Symposium that
a diverse body of scientific leaders together to inspire IBD innovations. This year’s symposium takes place July 15-16 at the Union Square Marriott in San Francisco.

Starting this year, Rainin is offering a brand new grant opportunity for symposium attendees, the **Synergy Award**. To encourage multi-disciplinary scientific collaboration, the foundation will provide $100,000 in research support for one year to each investigator on the team, up to a total of $300,000.

Our hunch is that Rainin plans other new initiatives to take on IBD as part of a larger push to expand the foundation's grantmaking. Why? Because they just hired a new health program officer, Jackie Hausman, who comes to the foundation from UC Davis with a background in public health and who brings experience in innovative technology applications for delivering healthcare. Is Rainin's IBD work going to move beyond support for high-level research to new activities working with IBD sufferers? We'll be interested to see.

General questions about the Rainin’s IBD-exclusive health program can be directed to the program staff at [health@krfoundation.org](mailto:health@krfoundation.org).
How Rainin's New Education Initiative Pushes for Parent Involvement at Home

Alyssa Ochs

Lots of foundations have early literacy grant programs, but few of them actually offer legitimate parenting advice for raising infants and toddlers. The Rainin Foundation recognizes that early literacy is much more than just preschool programs and after school initiatives. Learning to read begins at home, but unfortunately, many parents don’t have the resources they need to be effective teachers. Rainin, which focuses its education program on youngsters in Oakland, is rolling out a new initiative, called Talk Read Sing (Read Kenneth Rainin Foundation: Bay Area Grants).

To learn more about Rainin’s new initiative, I spoke with the foundation’s Director of Education Strategies & Ventures, Susan True. As True said, Rainin is a relatively new foundation, so it’s trying out a few new things for the education program. “There’s a lot of great small scale programs that help families read to children more, but it’s hard to bring that to a public health level.”
Talk Read Sing is a 90-day pilot program kicking off in Oakland this summer. The approach is simple and actionable, which is something that really appeals to parents with young children. The initiative aims to turn the world of a child into a learning opportunity by introducing families to prompts that encourage them talk, read and sing to their infants and toddlers every day. “We’ve heard a lot from families that don’t know what to say to their kids to help them learn," Susan explained. "Many parents don’t realize how much their words influence their child's growth.”

These are some of the Susan’s suggestions for parents who want to start incorporating learning opportunities into daily routines. The prompts are meant to be simple, straightforward, thought-provoking, and relevant.

- In the grocery store, talk to your child about where bananas grow and what other things are yellow.
- When making dinner, talk about the foods you’re cooking and where they come from.
- Sing a song to your child when changing his diaper.

Susan has been working with the Bay Area Council on this creative initiative/public awareness campaign, bringing a number of Oakland and regional organizations and businesses into the mix too. “What brings this to life is the creative ads, especially since that’s such a huge part of the expansion program that will potentially reach other parts of the state and country," True said. Goodby Silverstein Partners, the agency famous for the “Got Milk?” campaign, is the brains behind these creative ads, which will soon be plastered all over television, radio, and billboards in Oakland bus shelters.

Considering its Oakland focus on early literacy, this initiative fits nicely into the Rainin Foundation’s overall grantmaking strategy. The foundation is helping fund the campaign in Oakland, in a traditional grantmaking sense. But in a less traditional way, Susan has been helping lead and coordinate the campaign with Bay Area Council. The groups have also secured a partnership with Too Small To Fail, a national early education program that Hillary Clinton is affiliated with.
Rainin’s plan is to learn from this 90-day pilot program in Oakland and then open-source the campaign to other communities in the state and across the country. True says that major metropolitan areas, including Los Angeles and San Jose, want to implement the program in their communities, too. And although she hasn’t reached out much on a national scale yet, Tulsa, Oklahoma has expressed interest in using the campaign materials as well. However, Rainin won’t be helping fund campaigns in any other cities, since its focus is set squarely on the kids in Oakland.

True describes this new initiative as Rainin’s “shout from the mountaintops” work, but it is part of a broader foundation program for education. Rainin continues to do intensive work with preschool teachers to make sure that new kindergarteners arrive to class ready to learn.

As far as new grantees go, True keeps an eye out for programs that provide preschool teacher training and get books into the hands of young students. Rainin recently closed its open application period for education grant applications, and she expects the next open period to come around the end of the calendar year. Nonprofits that have ideas about how to integrate literacy into daily life for the birth-to-eight demographic should check out the education program Awards FAQ page and get in touch with the program staff at education@krfoundation.org.
The Rainin Foundation Steps Up to Save San Francisco's Soul

Alyssa Ochs

In San Francisco, residents need to make at least $30/hour just to pay their rent. This is often easier said than done for emerging artists who are inspired by the city and make it an eclectic place to live. Market Street is a historic artery and artistic hub in San Francisco, with large and small theaters that have endured decades of economic twists and turns. Last December, over a hundred activists marched down Market Street, where tech giant Twitter had recently set up its new headquarters.

One local nonprofit, the Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST), is working to buy and lease properties to stabilize arts organizations in the resurgent Central Market and Tenderloin neighborhoods. The goal of CAST is to prevent San Francisco arts organizations from being squeezed out by large corporations, thereby giving hope to some of the most challenging blocks in the city. To launch the initiative, The Kenneth Rainin Foundation awarded a $5 million five-year grant as seed funding to pilot CAST.

“The Foundation has long supported arts organizations in San Francisco and over the years, the issue of affordable space emerged as one of the biggest threats to their vitality,” Shelley Trott, the foundation’s Senior Program Officer for the Arts, said in a press release. “CAST represents the culmination of many talented people working together and investing their time and expertise to bring this idea to life.”

CAST’s first pilot projects are at 1007 Market Street (Luggage Store Gallery) and 80 Turk Street (CounterPULSE). Both of these organizations have been operating
since the early 1990s but are now confronting the risk of sale due to escalating rent. The Luggage Store, also known as The 509 Cultural Center, aims to build community, promote inclusion, and dispel stereotypes through multidisciplinary arts programs accessible to and reflective of diverse Bay Area residents. Counter PULSE provides space and resources for emerging artists and cultural innovators, using art as a catalyst for exchanging ideas and fueling social change.

“A major transformation is underway on Central Market, and arts are central to that revitalization,” said San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee. “Long-time neighborhood institutions like CounterPULSE and The Luggage Store not only anchor the growing arts district but maintain the fabric of creative nonprofit organizations that characterize Central Market. Creative endeavors like CAST propel the City’s efforts to enhance the role of arts organizations in the neighborhood while ensuring the longevity of these important institutions.”

“It’s going to be a combination of buying buildings and recycling financial resources, and utilizing things like New Markets Tax Credits,” explained Deborah Cullinan, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts’ new executive director and CAST board member. “The idea is, you put all that together, and you create enough density where it actually makes a difference, where you are actually impacting gentrification. You’re working with artists and organizations that are maybe indigenous, or that are working in community. It’s really about trying to come up with a solution to this thing everyone’s fighting about.”

The Rainin Foundation has partnered with the Northern California Community Loan Fund and the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development to propel these projects forward. The Rainin Foundation’s Imagining Central Market initiative is open grant proposals from nonprofit organizations, individual artists/projects with a 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor, and socially minded, for-profit organizations. The foundation puts a priority on joint ventures and collaborative efforts that contribute to a sense of place in the Central Market District. To be considered for a grant, organizations should connect businesses, residents, and community organizations through widely accessible public engagement.
Qualified projects include interactive art installations, architectural projects/mapping projects, and high quality visual and media art. The Rainin Foundation may also consider public plazas, facades of theaters, commercial properties, and local parks. For the current grant period, we expect to see awards announced in August 2014, and each grant will be $100,000. To learn more, check out the Imagining Central Market FAQ, or contact the Arts Program Staff with general inquiries at arts@krfoundation.org.
Online Publication

This Funder Aims to Tap the Power of "Synergy" to Accelerate IBD Research

Kristina Strain

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation of Oakland, California has been a pretty modest funder for most of its seven-year history. Lately, though, it’s been stepping up its game in a big way. Earlier this year, it announced the establishment of a completely new grant under its inflammatory bowel disease grant program, and now it’s announcing the distribution of $2.2 million through this new program and its two existing ones.

These are big doings for a foundation that used to have an annual giving level of about $3 million across all its programs.

Related: Where's the Rainin Foundation Going with its Work on Inflammatory Bowel Disease?

The new award is called the Synergy Award. The awards recognize researchers with slightly different areas of expertise collaborating in the name of progress. "Given the complexity of Inflammatory Bowel Disease, these interdisciplinary projects may dramatically accelerate the pace of IBD research," said Averil Ma, Chair of the Rainin Foundation's Scientific Advisory Board. "The selected projects reflect both the success and the promise of bringing together diverse investigators who share an interest in solving challenging problems in IBD."

I should pause to note that we’re seeing this strategy a lot among health funders, who see dividends in pushing researchers in under-funded niches to pool their resources. This kind of strategy makes a lot of sense when they're working on
something that not a lot of people die from, for which private money is therefore relatively scarce, or when the work is too risky for government funding eligibility. In these cases, researchers need to share tools and swap data, and try to crowdsource their way to breakthroughs with limited resources. That’s what this Synergy Award aims to encourage.

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation’s other awards, the Innovator Award and the Breakthrough Award, are specifically about providing researchers with the stability they need to get their new research projects off of training wheels—in other words, moving beyond proof-of-concept and into trials. Innovator awardees get a one-year, $100,000 grant, and are eligible to receive a Breakthrough Award after that term, if their work proves especially promising. Breakthrough Awards provide multi-year support of between $100-$150K.

"The Foundation supports projects at critical early stages that have the potential to change how we address IBD," said Jennifer Rainin, CEO of the Rainin Foundation. "The Foundation is confident that the projects we support will bring us closer to achieving our mission of finding a cure for the more than 5 million people who suffer from IBD."
Meet the Finalists for the SF Film Society and Kenneth Rainin Foundation's Round of Grants

Mike Scutari

Twice a year, the San Francisco Film Society and the Kenneth Rainin Foundation awards its Filmmaking Grants to promising feature films that will impact the Bay Area filmmaking community.

The organizations have whittled the field down to 14 finalists. Winners will be announced in November and at least $300,000 will be awarded to one or more of the winners. But before we take a closer look at some of the finalists, a check-in with the society is in order.

The SFFS/KRF grants, in no uncertain terms, are the engine of Bay Area filmmaking. Since the program's inception in 2009, the organizations have doled out approximately $3 million to regional filmmakers. What's more, they know how to pick 'em. Previous winner "Fruitvale Station" won prizes at Cannes and the Independent Spirit Awards, while "Beasts of the Southern Wild" was a 2013 Best Picture Oscar nominee. Not a bad track record.

Meanwhile, if you've familiarized yourself with IP's Grant Finder profile of the SFFS, you'll see its Filmmaker Grants are but one of an array that they offer Bay Area filmmakers. Other funding sources include their SFFS Documentary Film Fund, SFFS/Heart Screenwriting Grant, and the Djerassi/SFFS Screenwriting Fellowship.

Most of these finalists aren't simply concerned with "local issues." As the Rainin
Foundation's website notes, Filmmaker Grants are geared toward "narrative feature films with social justice themes that benefit and uplift the Bay Area filmmaking community in a professional and economic capacity."

narrative feature films with social justice themes that benefit and uplift the Bay Area filmmaking community in a professional and economic capacity. - See more at: http://krfoundation.org/arts/sffs-krf/#sthash.M3HgTnTt.dpuf

"Absence," for example, looks at a young Palestinian refugee who "unexpectedly becomes head of household and must sneak into Israel from the West Bank in order to earn a decent enough living to support his family."

"The Future," meanwhile, looks at Paolo, a "35-year-old single gay craftsman raised in an orphanage. His journey from the north to the south of Italy is an on-the-road story about the meaning of fatherhood and the pursuit of the future."

Of course, SFFS and the foundation aren't neglecting their Bay Area roots. "Fairyland" explores the experiences of a young girl who, after the sudden death of her mother, "is uprooted from her home and taken to San Francisco in the 1970s to be raised by her bisexual hippy father."

The envelope please...